



# DEVELOPMENT ACROSS THE DISTRICT

OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY MAYOR  
FOR PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

September 24, 2001

*"The District has seen a lot through its history. And now, we face an economic challenge that requires the full measure of our resources. We will meet this new challenge with the same energy and resourcefulness that we've shown in the past. We will not let the progress of the many to be derailed by the actions of the few. We will fight back. We will begin today."*

Mayor Anthony A. Williams

At the Grand Hyatt on Friday, September 21<sup>st</sup>, Mayor Williams met with nearly 50 representatives of the Washington area tourist, hotel, restaurant and convention industries, as well as labor leaders, business organizations, retailers and civic leaders. The Mayor spoke forcefully about the challenges facing our city and the Washington area after the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup>.

In his remarks, the Mayor discussed the District's emergency management plan, our response following the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup> and the city's immediate plans to help the industries most impacted by the tragedy—especially the need to reopen National Airport.

MAYOR ANTHONY A. WILLIAMS  
ECONOMIC RECOVERY PRESS CONFERENCE  
GRAND HYATT  
1000 H ST., NW  
SEPTEMBER 21, 2001

Good morning. As we reflect on the tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup> – and begin to focus on healing and rebuilding – we must never lose our compassion for those who have lost—those who said goodbye to a child, a father, a brother, a mother or a friend.

Some of the saddest days of my life were spent last week with the parents of three of our District's children—young people who were taken from us just as the promise of their future was starting to unfold.

Our grief will not end today. And for some of us, it may never end. But we must now take President Bush's words to heart. Last night as he challenged us in his address to Congress, he said:

*"It is my hope that in the months and years ahead, life will return almost to normal. We'll go back to our lives and routines, and that is good. Even grief recedes with time and grace."*

And so this morning – even through our grief – we begin to focus on the work and the challenges that lie ahead.

## The District's Emergency Plan

The District is the pillar on which the world's freedom rests. Our city is home to the most treasured symbols of democracy. And that will always be what attracts visitors to our city.

For more information, visit our website at [www.washingtondc.gov](http://www.washingtondc.gov)

Though we must recognize that we live in a different world than we did on September 11<sup>th</sup>, let me be clear: The District of Columbia has an Emergency Operations Plan. We have had one for over 20 years—and it has served us well. Our city's employees responded effectively under very challenging circumstances—and I am proud of their work and dedication.

But I recognize – and all of us here do – that we must develop new plans for the kinds of terrorist threats that we saw in New York, Virginia and Pennsylvania.

Our city had already begun the process of working with FEMA, the FBI, and other Federal agencies to develop a Terrorism Response plan for the Capital region. The plan was scheduled to be complete in Spring 2002. We're working to expedite its completion.

### **Our Economy Before the Attack**

On September 10<sup>th</sup>, the economy in the Nation's Capital was leading our country:

- Tourism was up—with a record 75% occupancy in our city's hotels in 2000.
- Office vacancy rates were down—at 3.3% when the year 2000 drew to a close.
- Unemployment was down—with 3,700 more jobs than the same time last year.
- And investment citywide was up—pumping \$10 billion into our economy from Ward 1 to Ward 8.

But on September 11<sup>th</sup>, the attack on our city – and our country – created the potential to cripple not only our spirits, but our economy as well. But today, we stand united—to see this challenge to resolution.

### **Seeing this Challenge to Resolution**

The District of Columbia has seen a lot through its history. We've braved the Revolution, the Civil War and the era of Vietnam. We've endured civil rights protests and financial emergencies. And now, we face an economic challenge that requires the full measure of our resources.

The District will meet this new challenge with the same energy and resourcefulness that we've shown in the past. We will not let the progress of the many to be derailed by the actions of the few. We will fight back. We will begin today.

### **The Effects of September 11<sup>th</sup>**

For example, there are 100 hotels in the District—and their average occupancy is down more than 50% since September 11<sup>th</sup>. There are 3,000 places for people to eat—restaurants that are already cutting hours, supply orders and staff. And there are 260,000 people who work in our area's tourism sector—and 50,000 of those jobs are now at risk.

Every year, visitors to the District funnel \$4 billion directly into our city's economy. And with our airport closed, we're losing those millions, day, by day, by day.

So, we've come together today – business, labor, government, universities, associations and unions – to send a very clear message to our country: We're proud of our city. We're proud of what we've accomplished. And we will not allow years of economic progress to be derailed by the heinous acts of faceless cowards.

It's going to take some time to build up to speed again. But Washington, D.C. is open for business.

For more information, visit our website at [www.washingtondc.gov](http://www.washingtondc.gov)

## **Immediate Action Steps**

Today, I'm pleased to announce the following immediate steps to help our hospitality industry bring another 25 million people into our city—the number of visitors we welcomed last year.

**Task Forces.** On Monday, I'll be signing a Mayor's Order to create a series of task forces. The goals of these groups is three-fold:

- to quantify any potential impacts as a result of the terrorists attacks,
- to recommend possible measures to counteract those effects
- and to develop a communications strategy to discuss these measures with the public and private sector.

We will have a task force on *Tourism*, to communicate a sense of confidence to the public and show them that all that the District has to offer.

We will have a task force on *Commercial and Residential Development*, so we can remain the premiere office market in the country.

We will have a task force on *Small Businesses*—because 90% of District businesses are small businesses. And these businesses funnel \$250 million a year into our economy.

We will have a task force on *Transportation*, to maintain safe and easy access to and from our Nation's Capital.

And we will have a task force on *Economic Impact and Consumer Confidence*, to hear the concerns that our citizens have—and to help keep them involved in our economy.

**Tourism Bill.** On Monday morning, I'll be sending to the Council a \$1 million package to promote tourism and investment in the District. I'm also pleased to announce that Bill Hanbury, President of the Washington Convention and Tourism Corporation, will be making a similar investment bringing our immediate efforts to \$2 million.

In addition, I'm proud that CVS has offered their training services to those workers displaced by the tragedy of September 11<sup>th</sup>. I thank CVS for the corporate stewardship—and hope more companies will follow their example.

**Federal Aid.** Finally, my administration will be asking the President Bush for a federal aid package to compensate for the loss to our city's economy. We'll be asking for targeted assistance, to help the economic sectors most affected by the impact of last Tuesday's attacks.

## **Reopening National Airport**

But beyond these immediate steps, there's another concrete step the federal government must take to get our economy back to speed. We must reopen National Airport. Every other airport in the United States is open. And if National Airport is the world's door to our city, with National closed—our city is shut down.

There are 10,000 people that work at National Airport—1,500 of whom are District residents. More than 45,000 passengers step in and out of its jet ways every day. And more than \$100 million is funneled into our region's economy – and \$12 million directly into the District's economy – from the planes that land, the families that eat and the travelers that buy at National.

But now – an airport that's undergone \$1 billion in renovations – is filled with nothing but shadows and echoes.

We must reopen National Airport. Because if it stays closed, tourists and businesswomen and men won't take the time to travel in from BWI or Dulles—they'll simply go somewhere else. We must reopen National Airport. Because the 10,000 people that work there have families to feed and bills to pay. We must reopen National Airport. Because if the Nation's Capital is closed—what does that say about the confidence and strength of our nation?

### **Working Towards Recovery**

All of us wish that we'd gone a lifetime without having to see or feel the images and emotions of September 11<sup>th</sup>—they are now permanently cast into the collective conscience of our culture.

People are uncertain. There are undoubtedly feelings of fear.

But to every resident in this city, the best way to help the District is to commit yourself to keeping it strong. If you're thinking of buying a house, do it. If you were planning on opening a small business, we'll help you. If your family was going to visit, tell them to keep coming.

I hope you'll all come to my Second Citizen Summit on October 6<sup>th</sup> to share your concerns and ideas.

And to everyone across the country, the best way to help the Nation's Capital – and the country – is to keep doing business in Washington, D.C. If you're coming to a convention, keep coming. If you're planning a vacation in DC, keep planning. If you're looking for office space, call us. If you're looking for retail space, we're open for business.

We're not going to change what we're doing. We're going to continue the practices that created our strong economy: focusing on the fundamentals, working together to create growth and telling the world that we're open for business. Thank you.

### **AND DON'T FORGET...**

***Date Change! Date Change! Then the International CEO Forum is November 28<sup>th</sup>.***

This International CEO Forum is coordinated by German American Business Agency (GABA) and sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Economics and Technology. The goal: to facilitate business relationships between German and American companies. Seventeen of Germany's most innovative information technology, tele-communications and bio-informatics companies have been selected to attend. They will be looking for potential partners such as you.

**Date:** Wednesday, October 28, 2001  
**Location:** Hilton McLean Tyson's Corner  
7920 Jones Branch Drive  
McLean, VA 22102  
(703) 761-5200

If you have any questions, feel free to call Emily Gildersleeve at (703) 836-6120

***IMF Meetings? No. Protestors? Yes.***

Although the World Bank/IMF Meetings have been cancelled, police are still expecting 10,000 anti-war protestors to descend upon the District this weekend. Keep tabs on the news, papers and [www.mpdcc.gov](http://www.mpdcc.gov) for more information.

###

For more information, visit our website at [www.washingtondc.gov](http://www.washingtondc.gov)